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**THE RELEVANCE OF GROUP WORK AS A MOTIVATIONAL TOOL FOR
THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATIVE ABILITIES IN CAPE
VERDEAN CLASSROOMS**

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INTRODUCTION

Researchers on language teaching have been promoting reflections and studies in search of better ways to make the learning process more effective. In the light of new principles of teaching and learning, methodologists have been suggesting new approaches to follow the dynamics of teaching and learning languages. As it is known from the history of language teaching and learning, one of the most successful experiences took place towards the end of the Second World War when the American military needed to train their personnel in the languages of the countries they would have to administer and/or deal with. In short intensive courses, the students learned fantastically fast. In Britain for example, the Air Force personnel were taken to Cambridge and taught Russian with enormous success.

Jeremy Harmer, in his book, *How to Teach English* highlights famous research carried out by Gardner and Lambert that suggested that students who felt most warmly about a language and who wanted to integrate into the culture of its speakers were more highly motivated than those who were only learning language as a means to an end. This fact leads us to the conclusion that self motivation is a very important factor in the learning process. Learners play undoubtedly an extremely crucial role without neglecting the teacher's contribution to the process of learning. Learners' motivation, reason for learning the language, the need to communicate, and attitude towards

learning are all very important.

Inferring from the examples above, it is unarguably true that motivation plays a crucial role in the learning process. This role is even more crucial when we believe that teaching a language is teaching to communicate. And how can one learn the fundamental elements that help or enable people to communicate if motivation is not involved? The teacher's role is especially crucial at this point.

It seems to be paradoxical when the greatest challenges teachers face in Cape Verde are motivating students to learn to communicate especially in large classes when it is common that there is a strong desire and need for communication. Group work is, by all means, an excellent tool to help cope with the demands of large classes. Because of the wide variety of dynamics it suggests and through the intense motivation it involves, all learners need to participate in the building of their own learning.

As Douglas (2000) stresses, "Pair and group work are effective techniques for taking students' focus off you as the centre of attention and for getting them into an interactive frame of mind even at the most beginning level" (p. 99). In Cape Verde this desire and need for communication does not seem to be difficult to highlight if one pays attention to statements from students such as: "I like English", "My favourite subject is English", "English is Fun". "I like English but my pronunciation is bad", "I understand, read it but can't speak". All this is derived from a great passion and love for the language that must be stimulated and encouraged. Teachers are by all means, the promoters of this "magic" and have the power to use group work as a tool for inducing motivation in students. Being so, why do most language teachers fear making students work in groups neglecting this magnificent teaching tool?

I believe these motivational issues are common and universal to all language teaching and learning processes to which Cape Verde Education System is an integral

part. This research paper aims at studying and presenting the main relationships and influences among these issues at the secondary school level in order to help demystify the process of group work in large classes and simultaneously motivate the students while working in groups through motivational strategies and techniques.

A thesis on motivation and group communication and its dynamics for teaching and learning success seems to gain more relevance when it is unarguably true that language teachers face enormous difficulties when making students work in pairs and groups. Bearing in mind that the conditions offered to teach language are poor, and aggravated by crowded classrooms, I must reinforce that pair and group work are the key to success. They offer numerous opportunities to expose the students to various situations and contexts that imply and require using the language. Again, this project has a role to play in guiding teachers towards using motivation and group communication strategies in their classroom.

The main purpose of this thesis is to present a study on the relevance of group and pair-work as a tool for motivation. Motivation is considered as the key factor to the development of the English language learning and teaching. The importance of motivation in pair and group work dynamics is highly dealt with along the development of this research. I will also demystify through demonstration of confirmed examples, that most teachers do fear having learners work in pairs and groups. This being so, another purpose of this paper is to come up with valid tools and a repertoire of tips and techniques that relieve teachers of the fear of pair and group work in the classroom.

This thesis consists of five chapters. In chapter one, I will introduce and discuss the problem of TEFL throughout the history of language teaching and learning methodologies and approaches through current times. Of course, I will devote some time to establish the framework that enables me to discuss the TEFL influence and

impact on language learning in Cape Verde. This chapter will debrief TEFL background and its evolution bearing in mind its contribution to English language learning in Cape Verde. Chapter II deals with issues related to the effectiveness of communication in groups in terms of dynamics it creates in large classes. This chapter will specifically refer to group work as a communicative act and how it motivates students. What large classes are, their nature and aspects of relevance will unfold this chapter. Considering that our teaching is largely based on large classes settings, techniques and strategies focus on this particularity.

Chapter III is particularly devoted to analysis of teacher's attitude towards motivation. It discusses my personal modest experience collected throughout ten years of teaching. This will involve formal and informal conversation with teachers, classroom observation as coordinator, notes and remarks from weekly coordination meetings. This chapter will also establish the bridge for discussing teacher's attitude and posture in relation to grouping students. Chapter IV is entirely devoted to critical analysis of the survey conducted with a representative number of students in my own classroom and in the other teacher's as well. I will use the data from the survey to compare opinions expressed in lower and higher levels of the school system. Balancing all elements derived from the discussions promoted through theory, exchange of opinions with teachers and questionnaire applied to students. This means trying to referee the apparent conflict between what learners think teachers do and what teachers think learners do. Finally chapter V will put a transitory end to this paper. It is transitory because this study is simply an iceberg in an ocean of so many things to be done. It will be divided into two parts. Part I, will take care of the conclusion. And part II, puts forwards recommendations through tips for teachers, Ministry of Education/ISE and School managers.

Chapter I

TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

1. Background and Evolution of Methodologies and Approaches.

Throughout the history of language teaching and learning researchers and teachers have been challenged by continuously higher demands on the matter. As contexts changed, methods and approaches had to change or adapt as well. Why methodologies and approaches needed reorientation? To answer this pertinent question we need some historical background.

At the end of nineteenth century all language instruction was based on the translation of written texts. H. Douglas Brown (1994) writes in the preface of his book *Teaching by Principles. An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*:

“We now gradually travel beyond the millennial milepost, we can look back with some pride at the recently century’s accumulation of knowledge about second language learning and teaching. Such was not always the case. The first forty years of the twentieth century saw little if any development of a field of language pedagogy.”

The Grammar Translation Method (GTM) was the chosen method to teach Greek and Latin for centuries. This method relies heavily on the students’ first language. Grammar is taught through exercises of a given structure without regard of context. As needs and interests towards learning language were changing fast, the GTM, proved inefficient, as students were having very little or no communication.

H. Douglas Brown specifies it even more when he cites Prator and Celce-Murcia (1979) who listed the major characteristics of Grammar Translation as indicated below:

1. Classes are taught in the mother tongue, with little active use of the target

language.

2. Much vocabulary is taught in the form of lists of isolated words.
3. Long, elaborated explanations of the intricacies of grammar are given.
4. Grammar provides the rules for putting words together, and instruction often focuses on the form and inflection of words.
5. Reading of difficult classical texts is begun early.
6. Little attention is paid to the content of texts, which are treated as exercises in grammatical analysis.
7. Often the only drills are exercises in translating disconnected sentences from the target language into the mother tongue.
8. Little or no attention is given to pronunciation. (p. 3)

Richards and Rogers (1986) mention the following about Grammar Translation repercussion on learners' memory: "It is remembered with distaste by thousands of school learners, for whom foreign language learning meant a tedious experience of memorizing endless lists of unusual grammar rules and vocabulary and attempting to produce perfect translations of stilted or literary prose" (p. 4). This passage is, no doubt, highlighting the lack of motivation caused by the use of explicit grammar based methodology.

In search of more appropriate teaching methods, in the last decade of the last century the Direct Method was born. This method appeared as a way to respond the deficiencies of the previous method. Attempting largely on the way a baby learns its native language, only the target language, i.e. English was used in the classroom with lots of oral interaction, and grammar taught inductively. That is, encouragement of spontaneous use of the language.

This method was quite successful at that time, but language teaching and

learning needs eventually surpassed the limitations of those methods. The Direct Method was largely criticized for its weak theoretical foundations. In its principles, teacher was still who spoke the most and of course, offered most guidance and orientation.

That is why the Second World War brought forth a new method based on the findings of behaviourist psychologists called the Audio-Lingual Method. This method assumes that language was little more than a series of learned responses to different stimuli. The main criticism to the ALM was that it tends to manipulate language and disregard the context. Although it was very successful with soldiers, this method proved fairly ineffective in the context of EFL classroom. As time went on, it was gradually replaced by more communicative approaches.

With the advent of the Humanistic schools, teaching and learning started to be seen from another perspective. The followers of this point of view wanted the students to become the centre of attention. Researchers from this school proposed that learners bring their feelings as well their reason and interest to the task of language learning.

The essence of their thoughts was that emphasis should be placed on reducing stress and anxiety in the classroom. Studies on language learning have shown that students do not learn well if they are threatened or isolated. This means that it is absolutely necessary for the teacher to promote atmosphere that is conducive to learning in a group setting.

In the early 1970's the *Communicative Approach* was born. Brumfit, C. & Johnson, K. (1979) advocated that language should be taught communicatively.

It emphasizes student-centred learning through functionally appropriate usage of language in context. The promoters of this approach advocate that teachers are seen as a guide or facilitator.

By the end of 1970's, the importance of the affective domain was increasingly recognized and that is why some more innovative methods took on a distinctly affective nature. Community Language Learning is a classic example of an affectively based method. This method sees language as more than a mere system for communication but as a mechanism that involves the whole person, culture; educational, developmental communicative processes. It advocates that the learner should reach a certain standard of independence and self-direction.

In the early 1960's the Suggestopedia was experimentally used by Lozanov. This method relies on good and attractive atmosphere in the classroom through reducing stress and anxiety levels. It uses mostly non-verbal forms of learning; and values music and songs as teaching device. Heavily criticized for its ambiguities and superficialities it did not survive long in that time. On the same line, The Silent Way was first suggested by Caleb Gattegno in the early 70's as one of the most innovative methods. These approaches indicated a radical departure from PPP-type lessons (Presentation, Practice and Production) which had tended to dominate language teaching. The Silent Way in Krashen's understanding was the method that requires very little intervention of the teacher. He/she remains silent offering little and only very pertinent guidance. On the contrary, this approach demands from the learner's full responsibility in their learning. The most prominent characteristics of this method were that the teacher works with the student and the student works on the language.

I could keep on mentioning other emerging methods of teaching English as a foreign language but that is not the central purpose of this paper. On the contrary, it proposes to highlight as above shown, that English language teaching and learning methods have been changing throughout the history of language learning. In addition, this work proposes to build a framework to discuss the process that contaminated and

influenced the teaching of English in Capeverdean classrooms. From this, it will progress in search of the reasons underlying the reluctance, if not, the fear of experimenting with more innovative approaches.

To establish a bridge between the historical evolution of methods in teaching English in the world and the Capeverdean teaching model, I feel the obligation to guide the reader towards its evolution as well.

The very few Capeverdeans that started teaching English were influenced directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously by the methods mentioned above. Eager to implement secondary education in every corner of Cape Verde, the government felt forced to make every means useful. I am referring, for example, to the utilization of those students who better succeeded in English during their studying career to teach English. These people became teachers.

If on the one hand, they received little or no guidance, on the other, they were not so interested in improving their performance because that was a transitory job while waiting for a scholarship or another better paying job. Another practice was having foreigners who came to Cape Verde as co-operant teachers. Struggling between lack of resources and local language barrier, they could only do so much, especially in regard to motivating students.

We should not neglect the impact of the Portuguese colonialism in education in Cape Verde. The curricula, the syllabi, even the classroom layout and organization were typically Portuguese ones. They created a kind of thinking habit that teaching should occur in this or that particular manner. But, in fact, what seems to have had deeper impact and influence in the collective conscious of teachers and students were the culture of fear in classroom.

On the one hand, the teachers feared the inspectors and pedagogic supervisors of

those time, on the other hand, pupils feared the very rude teachers. I must reinforce that there was a kind of chain of fear hierarchically established. The teachers feared the inspectors; and the students, the teachers. This culture of fear created a military-like discipline in the classroom, where students sat in formal order and simply followed teacher's instructions without demonstrating any sign of disagreement with whatever the teacher said or did. These attitudes and practices minimized language learning. Because learning requires peaceful conditions as referred to above, those attitudes were not conducive to good learning atmosphere. And this, in turn, installed a fear of working in pairs or groups or having the students communicate with one another.

As group and pair work rely on co-operation and sharing attitudes, they promote conditions for interaction. Thus, some "noise" is inevitable. It is exactly at this point that teachers fear losing their authority. Focusing specifically on the matter of Foreign Language learning, including English like secondary education, I must say that this fact is relatively new to the majority of people in Cape Verde.

Teachers of those eras were all inclined to teach through Grammar Translation Method. Why? Primarily because they were strongly influenced by the way they were taught and secondly because a significant number of them had little or no training in communicative approach or other innovative methods which hinders their initiative in dealing with activities that involve class dynamics such as pair or group work. Another pertinent fact is the tremendous fear of "noise" teachers are confronted with. Chapter III will conduct a deeper discussion on this subject.

With the above presented, I have established the basis and framework to confront teaching and learning as an act of negotiation and not imposition. One may wonder about the pertinence of those concepts. But it really makes sense when we think that people are only motivated to learn when they consider themselves part of that

project. I mean, they are invited and encouraged to express their point of view, manifesting their attitudes and feelings on this subject.

Exactly the same occurs in the classroom with students who need a space for themselves. They must explore themselves. That is, learners must know themselves better to, see where they can reach. To achieve this, they must be encouraged and stimulated to say what they feel or think. There should be a sharing of needs.

Jeremy Harmer (1988) puts it as follows: “Students need to be aware that we cannot teach them English unless they themselves are prepared to take some of the strain. Learning is a partnership between teachers and students.” (p.9). This helps to define the concept of negotiation as the sharing of feelings, needs and interest.

On the contrary, imposing on what student must do and not do, without options, produces an opposite effect. I mean, when teachers unilaterally decide on students’ lives without giving them any chance to negotiate their feelings, will, frustrations and the like, we are confronted with an act of imposition.

1.1. Teaching and Learning: An act of negotiation or imposition?

To say that the main actors involved in teaching and learning process are unarguably the teacher and the learner again, is stating the obvious. Both play very important roles in his or her respective degree and hierarchy but they complement one another. This is to say that without these two personalities, teaching and learning would not occur. Saying it differently, they are strongly dependent on each other. They are so dependent, that the class only happens with the existence of both of teacher and learner.

If the teaching and learning processes were so linear and evident as they seem to be, there should be a perfect harmony between the teacher and the learner and therefore, learning would occur naturally without much effort on the teacher’s part. The key could

simply be summed up as: “I teach, you learn.” “I learn because you teach.”

Unfortunately, the equation is much more complex than that. Teaching does not necessarily imply learning. Many other factors and circumstances play their roles in this process. Likewise in a communication act, teaching and learning imply and require the fulfilment of certain criteria without which understanding would be seriously compromised.

The teacher and the learner should be in perfect harmony. They are supposed to share the same code, the same channel in a context. And presumably, the most importantly are the willingness, the interest and motivation. Savignon (1983) refers to this aspect, “We learn very soon that the success of a particular communication strategy depends on the willingness of others to understand and on the interpretation they give to our meaning.” (p.4). The same occurs in the learning process. A lot depends on the learners. If they are not open and willing to absorb, co-operate or even negotiate with the teacher, there would be no competent teacher who could succeed in teaching. So, if teaching and learning comprise this intricate communication relation, it is absolutely fair to devote some time to the nature of communication. And it is exactly what the following chapter is about.

Chapter II

COMMUNICATION AS MOTIVATION

This chapter is designed to show the importance of group work as a communicative act. When group work is organized in language classroom it has the ability to motivate students. It is this premise that guides this thesis. This chapter will demonstrate not only the importance of communication acts in language classroom, but also the strength of group work when used to encourage student involvement.

2. What does a Communication act entail?

The purpose of this research is, as mentioned before, to guide teachers towards motivation and fostering of communicative ability strategies in groups. However, it would not seem to be pertinent to elaborate on communication and language teaching and learning strategies without first trying to define the communication act. Jeremy Harmer (1991) states that: “Communication between humans is an extremely complex and ever-changing phenomenon” (p. 46).

This being so, we should primarily try to define the nature of communication and the rules that govern it. For this purpose, it seems ideal to know the rules and principles underlying the communication act. It is known that many people, children for instance, know neither the rules nor the principles, at least consciously, but they communicate.

However, we insist that those mechanisms are to be known. Implicitly or

explicitly they are to be followed if the interlocutors aim at achieving the pre-established objectives and understand each other perfectly. On the subject, Richards (1985) states that: “communication is seen as largely consisting in conventional ways”. (p.86). For Nolasco and Arthur (1988) “conventions are rules governing what is considered to be acceptable behaviour in a given situation.” (p. 88)

Chomsky as quoted in Harmer (1991) maintained that: “Language is not a form of behaviour. On the contrary, it is an intricate rule-based system and a large part of language acquisition is the learning of the system.”(p. 33). Communication is first of all, a two-way process. Basically, the term “communication” means making common, sharing information. For this reason, communication is the act of transmitting some information from an individual to another. For example, Savignon (1983) states that: “communication is a continuous process of expression, interpretation, and negotiation.” (p.4)

No matter what is adopted as the most suitable or exhaustive definition for communication, the truth is that communication is a process that remains incomplete until the message reaches its destination as undiluted or unchanged as possible. Himstreet (1984:10). Referring back to the rules of communication, it is important to stress that it consists in determining who may talk to whom, how message should be presented, the duration of a communication session. All this is done to guarantee the quality of the message. In connection to this, Himstreet states that “...Whether spoken, written, graphic or non-verbal, the message simply cannot be more effective than the quality of its preparation” (p.10).

In other words, the communication process takes place in a social context and situation where the success of the act, the message itself, depends chiefly on the quality and efficiency of its preparation. We should not neglect other factors that impact and

obviously, influence communication in its transmission.

2.1. Teaching Communication in Large class. What does it entail?

Teaching communicatively is undoubtedly one of the most challenging tasks teacher face. It involves and requires a number of techniques, strategies, sacrifice and talents that sometimes (especially for less prepared teachers) make use of the most traditional methods. This consideration regards an ordinary classroom size only. Ordinary classroom size varies from region to region, country to country and also from continent to continent. This is to say that the concept of large class varies. And because of this, it becomes quite difficult to define it. Many authors avoid defining large classes and stick to its characterization. Nolasco and Arthur (1988) for example had difficulty in that section. For them the answer to the question “What large class is” varies. According to them, “teachers who are used to groups of 12-14 might find a group of 20 to be threatening. Others may feel relieved when they have only 40. Large classes are often found at secondary level but we have seen very large classes of several hundred in a University” (p.4)

As Long (1987) sees it, thirty to forty students is quite normal, forty to sixty is common, and numbers in excess of 100 are not unheard of. For the sake of intensive language instruction, some teachers have argued that from nine to twelve students constitutes the optimum class size. Others, then advocate that the ideal class size should be between 15-20 if one believes that numbers like those help with classroom management (p.14).

If we agree that teaching large class involves in itself, redoubled attention and skills, we must admit then that teaching in a motivating communicative environment in Cape Verde constitutes an absolute challenge. As Harmer (2003) advocates “One of the main

tasks for teachers is to provoke interest and involvement in the subject...It is by their choice of topic, activity and linguistic content that they may be able to turn a class round. It is by their attitude to class preparation, their conscientiousness, their humour and their seriousness that they influence their students.”(p.8)

When teaching through traditional methods only, language tends to be restricted to initiation. By *initiation* I mean, the very incipient and timid, trying to utter some words or expressions. Teachers that rely blindly on traditional methods stimulate very little or provoke no interaction in an ordinary classroom, which is reduced farther in a large class. This contradicts Widdowson (1978) that advocates in his book *Teaching Language as Communication*, that by learning a language as communication, learners have high probability of performing well in that language outside the classroom. Harmer (2003) in *How to Teach English*, states that Communicative Language Teaching has two main strands: “the first is that language is not just bits of grammar, it also involves language functions such as inviting, agreeing and disagreeing, suggesting etc., which students should learn how to use.” (p.32). The second strand of Communicative Language Teaching for him, developed from the idea that if students get enough exposure to language and opportunities for its use - and if they are motivated – then language learning will take care of itself.

As demonstrated above, teaching language in a communication setting, that is, in order to foster effective learning of communicative patterns, involves not only the willingness to but much more than that, the ability to provide learners with the effective tools to make them effective communicators. Simply, it makes them effective citizens, prepared to face the intricate puzzle of social interaction. In this social interaction, teachers’ roles are of vital importance. The heavy weight of responsibility falls upon the teacher.

It may sound superfluous to state that teachers must promote the necessary conditions and atmosphere that foster exchange in classroom. This exchange should start in the classroom simulating the real life.

Referring back to the purpose of teaching a language, we should not neglect people learn languages not so that they “know” them, but so that they can communicate. Penny Ur (1988) in *Discussions that Work*: Task-centred fluency practice highlights the pertinent role of the “topic” in language teaching. “One conventional way to of doing this is the “conversation class”, where a group of students sit down with a teacher - a native speaker if they are lucky – and are required to talk with her. This often generates into a more or less biographical question-and-answer session of the where-do-you-live-what-are-your-hobbies variety, monopolized by the minority of fluent speakers. The reason for this is in the first place the lack of a defined and interesting topic.” (p.5)

So this alert shared with us by Ur, is a clear indication that the topic by itself is insufficient if it is not well defined and appealing. The first thing teachers must do is to bring interesting subjects of conversation to the classroom. But solving the dilemma of choosing a topic for a classroom discussion does not necessarily solve the teachers’ frustrations or boredom when students interrogate them about the purpose of such topics. They need to see the relevance of the topic. And this happens because teachers usually make the assumption that what they select for classes is the ideal subject.

On this concern Penny Ur (1988) has the following understanding: “Topic is still seen by most teachers as the central focus of classroom discussions. To my mind, it is certainly important, but not central: the crux is not what to talk about, why you need to talk about it” (p.5).

Telephone conversations, (formal or informal), lectures, meetings or simple introductions or religious rites occur in two formats: In pairs or in groups. So, this is

more than an enough reason to teach our learners communicatively and in groups. Quoting Hymes, Richards (1985) argues that “when we speak we perform acts, such as giving reports, making statements, asking questions, giving warnings, making promises, approving, regretting, and apologizing. For example people can communicate in pairs or in groups for informal conversations, debates, meetings, interviews, descriptions and so on.”(p.101)

Bearing in mind all implications that a large class entails, we feel forced to conclude that the unique advantage it offers is the opportunity to break the class in small groups or pairs. These, in turn, are consequently crucial for any type of interaction teachers propose to implement.

We have been discussing the importance and relevance of group work without decoding its real meaning. So, what is group work? Douglas H. Brown (2000) defines it as a generic term covering a multiplicity of techniques in which two or more students are assigned a task that involves collaboration and self-initiated language. (p.177)

It has been demonstrated that group work generates interactive language. It silences the tentative of traditional classes where teacher talk is dominant. It helps to solve problems of classes that are too large to offer opportunities for all students to speak.

2.2. Teaching Communication in Small Classes. What does it entail?

I have noted that teaching to communicate is by its nature very demanding both from the teacher and students' point of view. Thus, teaching it in large classes is even more difficult for the reasons pointed out above. As large classes have been more threatening and of course, more predominant in Cape Verdean classrooms; small classroom sizes have been neglected. Only recently, and because of the education system reformation, small classes have called our attention to various problems. Small classes also cause problems to teachers in the third cycle dealing with 9 to 12 student classroom. If in large classes – first and second cycles (7th and 8th grades), teachers face problems of multi-heterogeneous abilities, attitudes, management, and probably lack of interest and motivation; which means they face the problem of *how* to do it. In a 9 to 12 student classroom, teachers are confronted with *what* to do. During my research and interactions, I began to realize that large classes are the 'norm' in Cape Verde and when faced with smaller classes, teachers have equal amounts of trouble.

I can document the information above presented, using the experience I gained during coordination activities I have been leading for four years on a weekly basis. Coordination is the moment of sharing techniques, ideas, joys, enthusiasm, frustrations and desolations with fellow teachers. Teachers have shared with me their frustrations when trying to make the very few group members interact in groups.

The big challenge lies on the following, though: managing the situation in which nobody speaks or the same students do it all the time. These are considered natural leaders. They dominate the audience. And the teacher's dilemma is "what can I do, shall I stick to those who want to participate and are really making some effort and ignore the other ones?" In fact, this is a tremendous challenge. Your role as a teacher is to work with and make everyone – without exception – learn. Both experienced and less

experienced teachers have shared with me this challenge and of course, the frustration deriving from it. The deal is to find ways, strategies and mechanisms to motivate the rest of class to partake the lesson in the way.

It is pertinent to raise the question of teacher's ability, enthusiasm and motivation. When evoking ability from students, teachers should make use of every tool and instrument teaching offers to benefit students directly in classroom and indirectly outside classroom. Because if learners know clearly that what they do or are doing in the classroom is a micro-life; a simulation of what occurs outside, their attitudes toward language learning would change.

Students need to be confronted with realistic situations encountered outside in real life. I still insist that the great remedy is in teachers' hands. Meaningful tasks with relevant and clear objectives are, no doubt, this remedy.

2.3. The impact of group work in promoting communication in large classes.

In the previous chapter, I tried to establish a link between Capeverdean schools and similar to other realities looked at in terms of classroom size. If I take the particular case of Domingos Ramos High School, the second largest secondary school in terms of population, we will reach the dreadful conclusion that teachers indeed, fear working in communicative setting. Many reasons account for this problem.

Although the purpose of this research is not to look at reasons as such but provide some remedy to teachers to use in combating this impediment to teaching communicatively, I will devote some time on discussing the reluctance of Cape Verdean English language teachers in embracing the great opportunities of teaching communicatively through groups or pairs in large classes.

It is, in fact, in groups that most “magic” in teaching occurs. Students change from completely silent and speechless students, they become vocal participants in the process. H. Douglas (2001) mentions that: “the small group becomes a community of learners cooperating with each other in pursuit of common goals.” As if this was not enough to highlight the importance of group work he continues “whole class-activity gives students a screen to hide behind-even 15-20 student classroom... students can relax in whole-class activity.”(p.178). The product of the whole group is typically greater than the sum of its parts. This means that the efforts put together in the whole group produce much more than individual student can. Furthermore, paired and group activities promote student interaction and decrease the anxiety many students feel when solicited to perform for the teacher in front of the whole class.

Group work appears to contradict those teachers who see themselves in the centre of the learning process. By this I mean those who dominate the lesson with loud long talking in disregard of the student talking time. What happens in this concern is that those teachers are neglecting all the benefits and advantages group work group provides. So, by hiding themselves behind the fear and demands of group work, they are depriving students from invaluable opportunities to learn cooperatively. It is absolutely unfair that teachers, who are in the position of making decisions, use this “power” to guide students’ lives, deciding on what and how to teach them. As we mentioned above, teachers fear many circumstances to which they do not have control or they think they lose control of. For instance, most teachers fear the fact of seeing their authority in class threatened. Some avoid allowing students to work in group arrangements because of lack of preparation. By lack of preparation I mean the ignorance and misunderstanding of the principles underlying group or pair work. They are ignorant to the world of advantages this working format provides students. They

feel apprehensive when they see students using mother tongue in class while working in groups. To sum up, we may admit that this fear, apprehension, hesitation, reluctance or even refusal is understandable. We must take into consideration the teacher's style and the students' preferences. The frequency that teachers use group work, pair-work or solo-work depends to a large extent on many factors; including the willingness to do it both from the teacher and students' side.

In the Capeverdean context the average number of students in class is around 40, if not more. Language teachers are demanded or forced to think of up-dating their teaching techniques and reviewing their styles. This is because we face strong lack of opportunities associated with lots of other adverse classroom conditions that altogether minimize the teachers' attempt to try. Continuing with the eyes on teachers as the central elements for the present analysis, this reminds me some authors such as Harmer (1991) who believes that teachers normally talk for at least fifty percent of a lesson. Therefore, the Student Talking Time (STT) would be reduced to a minimum of twenty-five minutes. But what I see as really threatening and dangerous for students' performance in language is the pride many teachers feel when entering the class with a single pen in hand and can speak for the entire class-hour. They have students copy everything they say or listen attentively to their lectures. As a matter of fact, in our context, only decent group-work models can give back to students their "lost" talking time opportunities.

Without this, consider a language class of 43 students. What can a teacher do in 50 minutes, after deducting the unavoidable administrative time? I mean the chaotic moment installed amongst learners, which requires firm and prompt intervention from the teacher. In addition to this, there is the attendance checking and other issues that aggravate even more if one is what is called in our system: "Director de turma." Once subtracted the amount of time from the class-hour, for reasons mentioned,

mathematically, the STT would be somewhat around one minute for each learner (if no other student dominates the lesson). My question is then: What does one minute of talking time mean per learner in class with, say, three meeting hours per week? Simple calculation tells us that it summarizes in 3-minute-talking time per learner, per week. The truth is that the teacher is simply confined to that. She or he cannot offer students more than that if the teaching model disregards group work.

Harmer (1991) illustrates that “Simple mathematics will show that if ten-minute accurate reproduction stage takes place in a class of forty, and each student response takes thirty seconds (including instructing and correcting) only half of the class will be able to say something at all”.(p.243). The impact of group work becomes even more tactful when we consider students outside the classroom with very few or null opportunities to use or practice English. So what amount of practice would language teachers provide their students if they avoid group work in class and by the known reasons students cannot use English outside? Thus, to remedy this situation group work in large classes appears as salvation.

Who does not remember children playing in groups? Certainly you have had the pleasure yourself to learn from them beautiful fantasy; excellent ideas generated by them. There are meaningful roles they assign each other, according to each other's personality and talent. These are vivid examples that children are creative and imaginative. If little children proved to be able to work successfully in group, without any preparation, skills or techniques, I have no doubt that if they are grouped under experts' guidance the out put would surely be much more profound. This image referring to children was not pointed out by chance. It reflects the authentic world. It is exactly the way interaction starts. It is in groups that learners learn to know each other better. They invest their time in knowing one another both in terms of character and/or

talents or know how.

Douglas H. Brown (1994) in his book *Teaching by Principles* refers to the impact of group work in classroom by stating “small group work provides opportunity for group initiation, for face-to-face give and take; for practice in adoption of roles that would otherwise be impossible.” Douglas also agrees that group work offers an embracing affective climate. This affective climate occurs surely because learners are close to each other. No matter the seating arrangement adopted, students feel warmer and more united. Students do not feel on a public display unable to offer each other safety, security and support. Learners do not feel vulnerable to how much other classmates may perceive, criticise or reject their ideas. In one word: group work makes the classroom more humanised in opposition to what had sometimes been too regimented.

In the Capeverdean context, there are four benefits that students receive from group work. First and foremost, students are able to communicate in groups, which, in turn motivates them to learn the language. Second, shy students do not feel the pressure of being in front of the entire class, which allows them to be more comfortable and gain more confidence. Shy students are able to lower their filter in small group settings, causing them to speak more openly. Third, students are able to better conversations without having to compete with more outspoken. The students in groups do not have to speak over other students. Finally, it is a break from the monotony of regular class structure. This, in itself, is an honest positive consequence of group work.

Teachers and students benefit from group or pair work. The motivation of students is a priceless outcome of the teachers’ willingness to open themselves up to group work. The debate on this issue would be expanded, as there is no ideal method or technique to teach this or that subject matter. And to aggravate it even more, it depends

highly on the teacher's style and classroom conditions.

2.4. Making the most of group work in large classes.

Group work in large classes is an issue Capeverdean teachers would do anything to master. Not because it is difficult but because of its nature. Group work embodies various elements that when isolated would neglect the essential heart of the question. To start discussing the headline above, I must ask teachers. How much do you know about grouping techniques? How much do you know about Teaching and Learning Principles? What makes a good teacher? How well do you know your students and you yourself? How much do you know about the school administration, regulations and policies? These are the only few questions to consider before any attempt to start grouping students and evidently make the most of the numerous advantages it provides.

Having students work in groups, in fact, makes some sense only if we can transform those questions in challenges. However, the questions themselves seem to be too intimidating. And that is exactly the reason why many teachers avoid working through this challenging way.

As a matter of fact, if you know yourself including your style as a teacher, you certainly know how much “noise” you are open to. What about your managerial skills? You surely know how easily you get frustrated or impatient with students that do not understand or pretend they don't understand your instructions I am also sure that you will know how sensible or vulnerable you are to criticism parents, colleagues, school administration, some learners make regarding your teaching style. These concerns are more regarding your teaching style. Are more acute when you are expected to stand in front of the class and “teach.” In this aspect, Byrne (1987) mentions the following:

“It is true that in some countries students (and parents) expect the teacher to stand in

front of the class and “teach”. That is, to control and instruct the students. In that case, they will probably expect other things too- lots of drills and no language games, for example.” (p. 34)

All these considerations are to take seriously. If on the one hand, they help teachers focus themselves, on the other, they guide them towards the purpose of any language teaching regardless the difficulty or challenge of the option. To summarize, they altogether compete and cooperate with the benefit to the learners. So, to make the most of group work in large class, one must get rid of some unprofessional teaching behaviour such as “may be I’m not capable to do it”, “it’s too difficult”, “if students remain silent and do not react to my instructions?” On the contrary, to make good use of this teaching tool, teachers should invest their talent in creating a classroom climate and task that is positive, stimulating, and energizing. All this only occurs if teachers establish good rapport with students.

Brown (1994) defines “rapport” as the relationship or connection you establish with your students. This relationship is built on trust and respect that leads to students’ feeling capable, competent, and creative and most of all motivated. But for me rapport is more than that. It also includes the dynamic, empathy, and the sense of belonging students create among themselves while working together. By dynamic I mean interaction among them including even some disagreement or misunderstanding

Nevertheless, at no moment you are to ignore the important roles of the activities and tasks you assign in class because they are immensely responsible for the increase of motivation without which has been proved that every step you take is susceptible of falling down. Another aspect to take into consideration is the student’s interest. Mary Underwood (1987) says that: “Your students will find their English lessons more stimulating if some of their English work is concerned with things that

interest them, so you will want to find out what these things are.” (p.27). This idea could be illustrated in simple group work assignment involving discussion around football. As I mentioned previously, “knowing your students” is the magic secret. Knowing your students means knowing their appetite for language. In short, what interests them? More of these will be dealt towards the end in the concluding chapter.

Chapter III

TEACHER'S ROLE AND ATTITUDE IN MOTIVATION

3. An introduction

A thorough definition of motivation and its implications would imply making a trip to many schools. There are many proposals of definition of motivation. I can briefly refer to the behavioural view of motivation; the cognitive view and the humanistic view. This last one brings more interest to the cause of this study as being more recent and seems to match better the classroom context and make it more interactive. On this respect, Brown in *Teaching by Principles* (1994) cites Maslow “For an activity in the classroom to be considered motivating, then, it need not to be outstandingly striking, innovative, or inspirational. Even familiar classroom procedures (taking roll, checking homework, small-talk at the beginning of class, etc.), if they fulfil lower-order needs, can pave the way to meeting higher order needs” (p.75). Continuing with Maslow according to Brown, “In the classroom, when learners have opportunities to make their own choices about what to pursue and not to pursue, as in a cooperative learning context, they are fulfilling this need for autonomy. When learners get things shoved down their throats, motivation can wane, according to this branch of theory, because those learners have to yield to others’ wishes and commands” (p.75). This discussion seems to converge in conclusion that motivation comes from within a person. So what

teachers can really do is create circumstances that influence students to do what you want them to do. In order to add more consistency to this study regarding this particular chapter, I will enter with my personal findings.

Throughout my modest 10 years of teaching experience I've done nothing other than learning about teaching. I am referring to the long reflections I have maintained with more experienced teachers and less experienced ones. I am also highlighting the readings regarding this subject I have been doing. But what I really consider superb, is the lucky moments I have had discussing with various fellow teachers since student teaching practice until today at Domingos Ramos high school.

For the sake of convenience, I have used the prerogative of being both an English teacher and the current coordinator at Domingos Ramos to interview teachers before and after classes, observe them teaching, make notes during our weekly coordination meetings, and using my experience in collecting every single comments teachers make relatively to teaching in general and their classes in particular.

As good listeners do, I adopted neutral position: listening more, speaking less. Of course as a researcher provocative questions came out fluently. Sometimes the questions were even embarrassing to them. To me it was clear that the predominant teaching style is teacher centered; speaking very loud so that every single student can hear them and writes things on board. In this scenario, the teacher writes mainly grammar points involving lots of filling in of blanks. I asked teachers whether they have been doing any motivational activities in class such as, grammar games, vocabulary games, word search, game activities and so on, the answers are things such as: "No, I don't. It's too noisy." "Yes, I do, but it's time consuming", "I tried but it didn't work". "Oh! No! Class 9 K is unbearable. Group work is impossible there."

I would like to share some routine questions I usually ask teachers during

coordination: ‘What were the students’ reactions towards your presence in class? What seemed to be the students’ anxiety towards learning? What expectations did you and your students negotiate? Do you have any concerns? Do the students seem to be motivated? The answer to these and other questions will be dealt with in the chapter devote to teacher’s attitude. Anyway, I cannot resist telling the reader that the global sentiment is of pessimism. Concerning beginners, teachers will say “They’re highly motivated but...” and if you insist they will proceed telling you that the students are too noisy...”I heard that class P is terrible”. “That Janice is talkative”. This could be understood as clear sign of fear of younger students and their hipper-dynamism. Those dealing with grown ups, feel privileged teaching higher level, in the one hand but on the other, feel the distaste of being ‘inspected’ by more attentive students; that have dealt with other teaching styles and possess a more acute appreciation skills.

When teachers are asked about students’ reactions in class, their motivation for the lessons; their comments used to be: “students don’t like to use English, their motivation is low.” When asked what they do or used to do to invert this negative tendency, the answer is somewhat as vague as: “I’m doing my best.” But in fact, there is one really honest teacher that believes that it is not his duty to motivate students in the class but only to teach. He added that he gets tired in class because he teaches five lessons and teaching a language implies speaking a lot in order to expose students to the language. Some other teachers remain silent when asked, meaning that they do not do anything to motivate students. Or what they do - the way they teach - simply does not motivate learners. These are true examples of excuses or problems most teachers encounter when trying to motivate students. However the most critical point is surely when a teacher tells you that he or she sent out of the classroom during the first lessons to impose respect because he had been informed that a class was particularly disruptive.

It is true the students are terrible. They make teachers crazy. When teachers manifest such attitudes, what can we expect from them in terms of motivation? This is a pertinent occasion to say that pessimism breeds pessimism. To help explain the teachers' attitudes towards motivating learners I have selected five common issues:

3.1. Dealing with large classes.

Dealing with large classes is one of the most challenging aspects in teaching. As the English coordinator and through my personal experience as a teacher at all levels in the poorest conditions, large numbers of students in each class is a major challenge.

The experience of teaching at Parque 5 de Julho an annexe of Domingos Ramos high school is a pure example of how discouraged teachers feel when trying to implement any dynamic method that involves working together. The room is extremely small for such a large number of learners. The classroom layout, the seating arrangements are all serious factors that inhibit learning. With larger number of students, less opportunity and willingness involving groups occurs.

In fact, those fellow teachers experienced moments of frustration, intolerance; that is, of complete desperation and chaos in the classroom. The inclination to send students out in those classes is really high. Attitudes denoting pessimism, neglectfulness, doing little, were common feelings among teachers working in such classes.

3.2. Dealing with small classes.

Teaching to communicate is, by its nature, very demanding both from the teacher and students' point of view. As large classes have been a more predominant for Cape Verdean teachers, small classroom sizes are only recently surfacing as great challenges to teachers. Small classes, I have found, are an equal challenge for teachers.

Recently, because of the education reformation, small classes have called our attention to various problems facing teachers in the third cycle. In large classes (first and second cycles, often fewer than 20 students are in a classroom, causing teachers to face completely different problems.

Small classes are becoming to a certain extent, threatening as well. Not only because of its demanding nature, but also because of skills, imagination and creativity to satisfy a much more demanding group. So, if large classes raise the problem of ‘how to do it’, small classes raise the question of ‘what to do with it?’

3.3.Administration and attitudes.

It seems to me paradoxical when the school organizes itself in terms of structure to serve teachers to help students, yet the effects are just opposite. The truth is that school administrations start conflicting with teachers’ and learners’ interests very early when they form classes. Sometimes classes seem to be grouped by age, other times, origin of students, alphabetical order of names, being repeaters or not, parents’ influence, and there are some ‘invisible hands’ involved. In addition to this, I can focus the attitudes towards language teaching. Language in most cases is seen by administration in the same way other subjects are viewed: relying on the trilogy: Teacher-Chalkboard-Student. (T-CB-S)

For the sake of administration, each classroom is delivered a register-book in which all names are listed. A teacher is usually pointed out to be the director of this or that particular class. The teacher organizes the class in a particular manner, and sometimes very rigid order that inhibits the few attempts of working cooperatively. That is, they create rigid seating arrangements, supervised by a *chefe de turma*. This fact inculcates in students’ mind the attitude that this place is mine. This means that the

flexibility needed in language is already strained. And that is why students present serious resistance to switching places when required to work in groups. All these elements and facts combined to create a negative feeling for language teaching and learning.

Another indirect impact of administration and attitudes exist. For instance, when language teachers promote fun activities, lots of interaction involving games, songs and the like, the next door neighbour teacher complains to the teacher about the noise level. Or the neighbouring teacher remains silently displeased while students are engaging in learning. Some teachers are reported to the board of direction of making “too much noise” and not teaching properly just because of a particular style. This is the system, which was created and has been maintained throughout the years. In this respect, any attempt at innovation is seen as a temptation against the system. That is, violation of the administrative system. In conclusion, School administration and the role they have been playing have revealed serious discouragements to teachers in performing the teaching task.

3.4.Lack of preparation vs. lack of appropriate materials.

I propose to see these categories together as I visualize a strict link between them. Very few teachers feel prepared to make their students work in pairs or group for the simple fact that these issues seem not to make part of our teaching culture. (See feedback and praise). Because it is not subjacent to our teaching culture, it does not constitute a teaching topic at the Institute of Higher Education (ISE) in Cape Verde. Preparation, for example, on how to deal with large classes in dynamic ways in the classroom is a deficiency in teacher training. I am basing this assumption on two sources of information: Firstly, I myself have been a student at ISE. Another point is because I have served as a support teacher in three teaching practices. In none of the

circumstances have I experienced any orientation in that direction. To make the situation even worse, is the heavy teaching schedule. Teachers do not have time to research because they run the risk of misfulfilling their duties as teachers. In addition to heavy teaching schedule, there is the situation in which many teachers teach totally different levels. Altogether, compete for a serious lack of time and consequently, deficient preparation on the subject.

Lack of preparation, however, is not the only concern. A very true frustration of teachers is the lack of material. Teachers are conscious of lack of materials such as course books, grammar books, tape recorders, posters, flash cards, appropriate classrooms (equipped appropriately) and the like. Referring to appropriate classroom conditions, a colleague of mine who teaches in a different school told me following story: As usual, every week I motivate my students with a different type of lesson. This time, I wanted to have a reading, listening-note-taking with my pupils. To my surprise the class where we usually convene was occupied. Should I ask why? I thought it was not important. Then, I tried another one but the plug was damaged. I had an idea! The teachers' room; no one is there at this time. I called all the students in, all enthusiastic about the activity largely announced, each one procure a seat or fetched one chair in the next door. To my surprise once again the PRINCIPAL arrived. 'What's this?' This is not a classroom! You can't have class here. No way! That's when, in front of my students...I felt most embarrassed, than ever before! Poor students tried to react... but who are they if even the teacher was scandalized?'

This example is a typical one to highlight in every section already dealt with. It applies perfectly well in both administration/attitude section above and this one of "preparation/material/conditions."

Referring back to the dichotomy between lack of preparation and appropriate materials, I must stress that these problems throw teachers into an even more frustrating position of waiting until they get the ideal conditions. Teachers are faced with things on their own or waiting for things to change first.

3.5. Feedback and praise

The end of a lesson and the finishing of a task in a lesson do not constitute the end of the day. Whether well performed or not, I believe every teacher makes paramount effort to achieve the pre-established goals. Although the teacher is by nature, an actor, his or her performance is not followed by feedback and instant praise as it occurs to artists, singers, presenters or other jobs like piloting that as soon as the pilot has arrived successfully to the destination, all passengers have the habit of applauding him or her by clapping their hands. If the same occurred for teachers it would not be considered an exaggeration. Teachers do need certain amount of reinforcement. One particular aspect of teaching is to highlight. Its sequels and influence last forever. Good or bad it penetrates deeply in students' minds and hearts.

However what teachers need is something more consistent, more sustainable and constructive. Of course they must hear words like: "well done", "perfect", "it was good, excellent" etc. But the feedback I am referring to is a bit different. It also includes the reinforcement words I have mentioned but it goes beyond that. It goes beyond the feeling, emotion, admiring or heart issues but penetrates deeply in technical paradigms involving what, when, how, to do every single aspect of a lesson. Whether it is designing a lesson plan, conducting a class, checking students' understanding, or simply marking a test, it involves great amount of professionalism. The challenge is exactly at

this point. The more professional one is, the more is required from her.

To this constant demand for '*perfection*', I call it feedback. It can occur through assessment, criticism, observation or simply listening with interest. It is an essential part of the teaching activity that unfortunately is extremely neglected in our teaching environment.

Culturally, giving and receiving feedback does not make part of our teaching routine. To illustrate this, at Domingos Ramos tremendous conflicts and frictions have occurred since the Pedagogic Council has started observing teachers perform in class. Why is this happening? Because is it mandatory? The ministry only recommends it. It is written on school regulations. From teachers you hear comments and interrogations like: "why are they doing this?" "They don't have anything else to do". "I've been teaching for 25 years. What do they understand about Psychology, Mathematics or English? I won't allow anybody in my class. I've written a note telling them so". To minimize the impact of being observed, in each observation, the pedagogic director is accompanied by the respective coordinator. Prior to any visit, the respective teacher is informed. This is to fulfil some bureaucratic procedures. This meant to be some evident examples of the culture barrier I referred to previously. This was to demonstrate that neither the feedback giver nor the receiver is open enough for such sort of a professional development system. By no means, should feedback and praise should occur only from the outside. Teachers should feel it class and outside. It might occur from students, from the pedagogic side, from peers. However, if it does not occur from none of the sources mentioned, you yourself should take care of your own. Praise yourself after the day. Look for positive things you have done and highlight them. Tell other colleagues, ask a couple of students

what they think they have learned. (I am putting the question this way because students normally do not congratulate you for what you did for them but for what they got from you). Go home take some time to reflect on what you have done. Try to find out whether there is a match between your objectives and the ones designed for students.

All of these are invaluable tools to combat the lack of constructive feedback and praise every teacher receives. It is more important to receive honest and sincere feedback when we place teachers in the referee position. I mean, they are the ones who manage the gaps existent between the ministry and its curricula and the schools and their students. Teachers are the ones who harmonize the gaps between the organization and performance of classroom activities.

Classroom activities as such, are susceptible of imperfections, mistakes, misunderstanding and so on. These deficiencies I have referred to should be tackled immediately after any activity. It is most important not to leave the problems hanging in the air.

In conclusion I have to stress that feedback and praise are vital for the for the teachers' lives as they need to revitalise every day to benefit students. We must not neglect the immeasurable satisfaction good and honest appreciation offer.

Penny Ur (1988) in *Discussions that Work* states that there is nothing so practical than a good theory.(p.24) I make these words mine to invite not only teachers but also decision makers, and all those who gravitate around teachers and teaching to read about feedback and reinforcement theories in order to practice motivating those whose job involves permanent motivation. In one

word, the attitudes towards feedback and praising must change radically.

Throughout the preceding chapter I have guided the reader towards pertinent issues that being routines, tend to be neglected. Teacher's attitude relative to their teaching; their classroom (large or small); their learners' impression on them; their relationship with the school administration and attitudes manifested in response; the lack of professionalism/lack of appropriate teaching materials and the noticeable lack of culture of feedback and praise, was of paramount importance to the discussion of Teacher's Role and Attitude in Motivation. As one could infer, the teacher's perspective is extremely important and under all aspects. But as teachers and students have been pointing fingers to one another, accusing each other here and there, once again I will devote some time mediating them on this particular issue of motivation. That is why the next chapter discusses the survey results gathered from students. In this chapter, I propose to compare these actors' perspectives making an effort to uncover the root of motivation problems.

Chapter IV

STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

5. Analysing and comparing the questionnaire

This chapter combined with the previous one about the teachers' attitudes, constitute the fundamental section of this study. I am explicitly looking for specificities related to students' daily life at school. That is why their opinions are highly valued in this research: Firstly, because there is a number of contradictions and mutual accusations between teachers and students. Secondly, it is because teachers owing the hat of authority have been pointing fingers to learners as those who do the least for themselves. They have been accusing learners of lack of enthusiasm, motivation and interest. In other words, everything that does not occur as planned is due to students' negligence.

In this respect I conducted this survey with students to demystify these imbroglios between the two actors. I want with this survey to highlight the most relevant aspects of students' thoughts relatively to their own learning. And what they really think about teachers. I asked students questions such as the importance of English and teachers' roles in their motivation. I also asked them specific question relative to class routine. For this I questioned 30 students of several different classes and three different levels; obviously from different teachers, namely 8th, 11th and 12th. I called the 8th grade students to represent the first cycle as they have had one year of English class, which is very little in terms language competence and is a lot in terms of motivation to

learn. They are eager to exposure to the language. In principle they are much more tolerant than upper grades. This means that they are more condescending with the teacher's attitude. To represent the 2nd and 3rd cycles I chose the 11th and 12th. Why? This is simply because I don't recognize this subdivision per cycles working for languages.

For English at least, it did not work properly. It provoked lots of confusion and discrepancies in terms of contents and language acquisition. How come for example a student in 9th grade (2nd cycle) has the same amount of years of English as a student in 9th grade (2nd cycle) has the same amount of years of English as a student in 11th grade (third cycle)? This only occurs because of the optional system in Cape Verde. So, for the particular case of this study, the 11th grade, level three will be equivalent to 10th grade - upper 2nd cycle – and early third cycle. The pure 3rd cycle was represented by 12th grade students that will soon finish with 6 and 4 years of English. Through the method used, I am quite sure I was able to cover all levels in this study. What these learners shared with me in this research questionnaire is of invaluable importance.

First because upper level students are more mature. They are more conscious about their learning needs, more dynamic and demanding as well. They are different than the younger students that still see teachers as prominent heroes who do everything perfectly. To testify the maturity referred to, I will present myself as one of the “victims” of students' frustrations. I am referring to a particular case that occurred in a 12th grade class three years ago in an introductory lesson. As usual every teacher wants to make good impression. I started like this:

T: Hello! Hello! Good morning class...

SS: Good morning, teacher.

T: Good... I'm very impressed with you.

S: Why, sir?

T: Yeah... because I see you reacted well to English.

SS: (in chorus) that's exactly what we need! We're fed with Present Simple, Present Continuous, Past...GRAMMAR....

T: All right... (I stopped, didn't even present the syllabus for the trimester)

This was for sure, one among many other ways of demonstrating frustration these students used. This time, it was explicitly, against the explicit teaching of grammar. From these three surveyed groups, I will be looking for points of common agreement and divergence relatively to:

- The importance of English and Why;
- The relevance of topics and activities in motivation;
- The importance of Group work in English classes;
- The impact of group work on learning the language;
- The influence of the teacher's attitude on learner's motivation;
- The ideal teacher in students' perspectives.

The 10 research questions were written in Portuguese to allow more understanding and more comprehensive responses. Each group was co-supervised by a student and the researcher. They were a total of thirty students in three different groups. The questions and responses were the following:

1. Do you like English? Why?

The answers were unanimously: "Yes" And the comments were sounding: "it is important". "If it is not because of its international value in social and cultural integration, it is because of prestige or job reasons opportunities." This was curious because I would not expect students at 8th grade to reason so deeply.

2. Describe briefly the English lessons you have been having.

Typical responses from 8th grade students:

“The classes are good, easy, the teacher explains well”. ‘They have been good, interesting, but too much noise’ ‘They are fun but sometimes annoying. Funny, noisy, simple, animated, somewhat noisy, students do not pay attention, the teacher calls attention but they are impossible.’ “Future: be going to, will, past simple...”

“Comparatives: short and long adjectives; grammar lessons; exercises on material already presented.”

As has been demonstrated students at this level ask for more dependence on the teacher. The higher level students reacted as follows to question 2: ‘They have been good as have been discussing important topics such as social issues, migration, human rights, the environment, and grammar; open classes, very participatory, enjoyable; everyone feels well; “relaxing” lots of debate, each student presents his point of view; our lessons have been of no interest from the part of students and the teachers are to blame for not motivating students; the lessons are active and democratic.”

It seems that older students value classes that are democratic, dynamic and interactive and topic-relevant, and stressless classes. On the contrary, they detest monopolization by teacher reaching the extreme of condemning the teacher for lack of motivational strategies. This simply reinforces my assumption thesis that they are more mature and less benevolent to teachers.

3. English lessons have never seemed endless to you? Yes/ No, Why?

Out of 13 students who answered this question, 8 said ‘yes’, while 5 responded ‘no’. The classes do not seem endless. This means that 61.6% of

lower level students do not agree that the lessons are endless. This comes in approval of what I have described on the same purpose previously. Grown up students however, consider that the lessons are in general way too long. Some of them omitted their opinion to this question, though. 77.7% of students consider English lessons endless. The typical reasons were that “the teacher speaks too much”, “the teacher gives extravagant examples”; “sometimes it is the last hour of the day, we are tired; when the topic and content of the lesson are not interesting, or when I don’t feel well which rarely happens.” Once again we are confronted with students complaining the teachers’ posture in class overtly, while teachers state that students are not interested in class.

4. Do you often work in groups in English classes? Yes/No

The typical answers to question four was “yes.” Asked to comment on how working in group contributes to learning, both younger students and upper ones agree that it is important for the development communicative ability; it is conducive to mutual help and students learn from each other. “We learn to accept and respect the opinion of other people; we socialize”.

There is a consensus on this matter concerning the importance of group work. Learners consider that working in group promotes speaking, writing, vocabulary and grammar. Besides this, it increases the participation level and gives room for socialization through interaction with each other.

5. How can group work help you in your learning process? Comment.

All students either beginners or grown ups, consider that group is beneficial to them. Some other learners commented that teachers should promote a lot more group work

in class and out of it. They agree that it is the best way to learn from each other and avoid “too many eyes” on you.

6. How do you get motivation for an English class? Is it the activities, the teacher’s attitude or the importance of contents?

Most students no matter lower or upper grades consider the three categories simultaneously important. Represented numerically we have that concerning:

Importance of the topic: **11**; Attitude of the teacher: **18**; Classroom activities: **13**

Inferring from the figures above makes it clear that students were particularly interested in this section as they answered massively to all categories. This meant to unify the data collected in the questionnaire addressed to a population of 30 students. This proves once again that all students disregarding the level appreciate having good teacher, enjoyable lessons, and relevant topics, creative activities such games, drama, vocabulary search, writing free compositions, presentations and the like. They gave clear examples for each category; followed by pertinent comments. For instance, a student wrote the following concerning motivation for English class: “due to my teacher, her position, explains... her attitude in teaching”. “Sometimes the contents might be boring but the manner how she teaches it helps minimize this.” Others said “she has good posture and sense of humour.” “He’s my favourite teacher”.

7. Describe your feelings when you work in group.

The responses to the question above did not vary much. Students refer to opportunities they have to discuss during the work, giving their opinions and points of view concerning. Students were able to distinguish between the funny side of working in group - that is – find time to enjoy themselves a little bit, and the other side of working hard to compete and present for the whole class appreciation. “I feel

responsible, I'm more active." This is to exemplify that when required learners take tasks seriously. It is also to congratulate when you find beginner students defending position like: "...more heads think better than one" or "I feel more at ease to share my opinion and learn more", or "I feel more confident;" "I have more opportunities to speak." They also said things that make me think that group work increases self-confidence: "when I work in group I recognize I know something."

But radical opposition to group work is not impossible to hear of. This was a remark from a student reaction: "I don't like group work, although it's important and have many advantages. I like working individually where I can expose my ideas without being approved of or not." The same student was simply coherent to herself when she writes that her feelings in group work are of boredom, stress, and especially when there no recognition for the work executed. This is a sentiment of pure desolation and disappointment for working in group. Where are you teacher? What's your role as such? Isn't it time to learn to appreciate students' work? Just as noted in the previous chapter, teachers feel unappreciated, as do the students.

8. Mention some words that the teacher uses to stimulate you.

In this section I am going to present the students statements in the first person as it is of great importance to read exactly what students say concerning their feeling to what a teacher says. Words of encouragement or discouragement are extremely meaningful to the student's life. They can influence and perpetuate for the whole life.

For the sake of clarification I will divide the findings in this section in three categories:

a) Educational and Instructional

"Don't get frustrated, you will see improvement soon;" "You need to study more...more work..."

“It’s not difficult;” “Try it”; “You must study to become men and women of tomorrow;”

b) Motivational and psychological reinforcement

“Very good, well done;” “Keep up doing so”; “You’ll get it;” “Keep trying”; “That’s enough”, “intelligent,” “well behaved today, Adilson!” “You’re studying hard now!” “Go ahead, you can;” “Come on, you can;” “let’s do it together;” “Don’t give up;” “Go on!”

c) Pedagogic and academic

“Today we have a new topic but it’s easy! Like... the comparatives; you’ll see.” “Let’s do it together;” “pay attention to this”; “concentrate first;” “speaking you are learning;” “in English, please!” “You always do homework;” “Go to the board.” “Pay attention. This is very difficult/easy.”

As it has been demonstrated above, it belongs to mankind nature the need of recognition and appreciation. Students were clear in this respect. They mentioned all the words, terms or expressions the teachers have used or they would like them to use. They also mentioned story telling, jokes, humour and games in class as very motivational tools. I must emphasize that teachers whether conscious or not, are able to adopt a multitude of roles. As demonstrated above in their own words they can be teachers, pedagogues, psychologists, parents, actors, police officers, and so on. However, the tendency has been to stick to the teaching schedule and lesson plan, observing every single detail of curriculum requirements neglecting crucial aspects students have just mentioned.

9. Mention some words that have discouraged you.

A student started saying that it depends on the way the teacher puts it. “If the teacher says we don’t have capacity to have good grades, of this will discourage us.” “The

teacher keeps threatening us with marking a minus credit or I'll send you out". "When the teacher says bad things about Praia for example" "The teacher tells us we speak too much". "We are 'burro' (with 3rs)". This means really very stupid. "You only play in class, don't know anything at all."

In fact, lots of students did not answer this question which is understandable to me. It is talking about their master. The one they have to cross with every other day in principle. But some, in fact, confessed they did not hear anything heartless or discouraging. I do trust them, especially the more grown ups that really possess acute sensitiveness to these matters of feeling. However, I do believe that if I posed a question like: When talking with the teacher, (complaining, asking, demanding or requesting...) haven't you ever noticed any signal of displeasure, lack of attention, or other discouraging attitude, I would surely persuade them to answer differently. I am referring to non-verbal reactions that most times are unnoticeable, or neglected because they do not provoke scandal as they are not heard but needs to be read. To read it one must be attentive and good observer. Those two opposing questions are exactly to demonstrate that teachers can be as sweet as rude to their students sometimes.

10. What sort of teacher would you like to have?

The answers to this question were divided as it was on purpose. The group of lower level kept saying that their favourite teachers must be (when they don't mention names only): "comprehensible, funny, friendly, simple, attentive, explains well, animated, likes to play in right moments, punctual, intelligent." Although being very young and still need of course, some room for childish things, they do not neglect more serious aspects like "a teacher that explains well, is punctual, teaches well, intelligent, serious", "*com mais pulso*. (This means a more demanding or firm teacher)."

However, it is noticeable their lack of experience with other teachers when they mention names of their current teachers which rarely occurred in upper levels. This attitude explains the passion for their favourite teacher. This same teacher, dealing with upper level might be disliked or criticized.

Upper level group, however, reacted to the question as follows: “I would like to have a teacher who is always in good humour, well tempered”; “dynamic and especially, puts the learners in the centre of attention.” This last account is super. The student touched the fundamental principle of any language teaching- Student-centred-principle. He goes further saying that his favourite teacher is the one who accepts the student’s opinion and is friendly.

Another student mentioned that her favourite teacher “shouldn’t be annoying, but experienced, and demanding (a bit).” “I would like a teacher that debates with us what we think about the class; and taught more interesting issues.” This next student values in a teacher the qualities of being open-minded, modest, intelligent and principally innovative.

I feel a strong inclination to conclude that while younger students tend to look for emotive and affective issues in their favourite teachers, the older ones go beyond that expressing clear understanding of their rights. I meant, being fair to them, being called or included in discussions relative to their lives. This group of students is of course more critical as being more mature and has been exposed to other situations with different teachers as their age facilitates that. However, because it was not asked the students did not tell that they do not like the manner her/his English teacher dresses. I have heard: “She sounds old in that green dress; always the same pair of shoes!” this example could be expanded to other aspects of personality, mood and the like.

This chapter made it clear that the attitude towards the teacher is changing

gradually. This means that in the near future the teachers, the heroes of today, will be seen merely as facilitators and condition promoters in the classroom. Students are becoming more and more demanding in terms of their learning and are requesting more and more up-dating from teachers. The teachers, on the other hand, have to increasingly adapt their teaching styles to the demand of new days. I guess the considerations helped to clarify misunderstandings among students regarding their attitude towards the relevance of motivation in teaching and learning. My findings tell me that no one should feel indifferent to the phenomenon of motivation both in teaching and learning.

Chapter V

CONCLUSION

Part 1) Conclusion

Throughout this research paper, I have demonstrated that teaching learners to learn to communicate implies teaching teachers to learn how to teach learners to communicate. I am not playing with words. In fact, I was able to evidence that there is a huge deficiency on teachers in terms of communicative approach abilities. I also managed to put clear that language is meant to teach for communication. That is why I emerged in TEFL background just to make it clear that there is no best method and as time went on, needs of and for communication kept changing and so, approaches to language had to change as well. I leaned on prominent language researchers such as Hammer, Douglas, Richards and Rogers, Brumfit and Johnson, Long, Penny Ur among others, to demonstrate that if language should be taught, then teaching it communicatively must be the teacher's mission.

My big triumph, however, was more than the theoretical navigation in the ocean of language teaching, but our local resources: Our students, teachers, administrators. I am specifically referring to the long conversations established with my colleagues. I must not forget my (in) formal observations during coordination meetings; the periodical evaluations I ask my students to do me. But what really impressed me was the interview with students as they are innocent; I mean sincere to what they tell you. All these elements are more than enough to entitle me to say that English language teaching in our secondary schools needs another (re) orientation. It must be taught in the

way to enable learners to acquire linguistic competence and speaking skills. To me, this is the ultimate goal in any language.

On the same line I have been trying throughout this research, to highlight the importance and pertinence of group work as a tool for MOTIVATION. I am the one who believes that motivation is the key to success both in teaching and learning as well. I also believe that motivation is everywhere. It is in the air. That's why it is considered dangerous to assume that one knows what is motivating someone because you really cannot read his or her mind. If everything motivates, the opposite must also be true. My conclusion is that motivation is a must in any language teaching process: being it the teaching of Russian to the British Air Force Personnel or the teaching of English to Pre-school children. That is why in this thesis I conclude that group work is a key component in motivating students to learn English.

The unarguable truth is that both the learner and the teacher must be or feel motivated. But this last one has higher weight in the process. I corroborate Erickson (1973) entirely: "Effective learning in the classroom depends on the teacher's ability...to maintain interest that brought students to the course in the first place." (p.3) In this thesis, I found that teachers are often unaware of what students need to be motivated on. I discovered that group work provides students with an outlet for communication which leads to motivation.

I set out in this research paper to highlight the advantages of group dynamics in large classes, but also found that group work in small classes presents challenges for teachers and students as well. I quoted prominent authors on the matter but having never neglected our honest students whose contributions were invaluable to the conclusion I have reached: Teachers must have learners work in pair and group. This model fosters communicative ability in and out of class; it increases the level of motivation of both

student and teacher and also helps relieve the anxiety level which, in turn, competes negatively in the teaching and learning processes.

I do insist on group and pair works as the magic tools in large classes because our reality is made of large class setting (at least the 1st and 2nd cycles). If there is no way to reduce it, at least in the near future, the remedy is learning to cope with large classes. I have noticed another immerging fact. That is, the appearance of too small classes. It is another challenge that being uncommon becomes another problem teachers must learn to cope with. No matter the degree of difficulty felt in both groups of learners, teachers have manifested a significant dose of reluctance to work through more dynamic styles using more daring approaches. Many teachers still feel too tied to “I am the teacher, I teach you...” and most teaching resumes in grammar structures presentation. The common complaint among teachers was that students do not talk. They are not interested. On the other hand, students demand more space for sharing; more challenging activities to force them use English.

To finish, I must throw this “SOS” to all teachers that motivation is the key. Although being magical, there is no magical formula to it. We must find it everywhere. Once found, we need to preserve it through intelligent teaching models that involve interactive sharing by creating an atmosphere that is open and positive.

Part 2) **Recommendations and tips**

a) For the teachers:

The first step toward successful group work is to begin early. Students need to be taught how to work in group from the beginning of their school education. Teachers must begin by grouping students and giving them very specific and meaningful tasks. Group work at the lower levels is difficult because students are accustomed to teacher-centered learning. Requiring students to work in groups at younger ages will begin to motivate students toward communication. It will encourage them to speak with one another in a non-native language. It will allow all students to participate in learning and maximize their talking time. I found in my research that younger students fear group work, but I believe this is only because they are not used to it. I would encourage teachers to begin slowly and work closely with each group to offer guidance to students who are new to group work.

Teachers must realize that they will have to give up some control in their classroom, but the rewards are infinite. In chapter 3, I noticed that many teachers are reluctant to have students work in groups because they are no longer in control of their students' performance and what they are learning. Teachers also avoid group work because it takes time away from 'test-centered' learning, where all learning models written tests that students will take. Some teachers avoid group work for fear that students will use their mother tongue; however teachers must set rules for group work which include requiring students to speak in English. Finally, it seems that teachers are afraid of the noise that group work creates, but group work can be managed in such a way that that it is less noisy and equally as beneficial.

I do recommend that teachers should, depending on the level, work on topics that are relevant and meaningful to their students. I am referring to topics that really

make impact on our learners. Relevant topics in group work will encourage students to speak because they have experienced the topic and/or can relate in some way to the topic. Some examples:

- Keep our countryside/village/town/beaches clean!
- Make our roads free!
- Holidays (Christmas, St Patrick's day)
- Fight poverty
- Famous people (sport, fashion, cinema, music...)
- Who are "Thugs"/ what to do with the Cash or Body?"
- Stop cruelty to animals/children
- Abolish PGI/PGN/My favourite teacher(s)

Once the topics are chosen, teachers should work on strategies of presentation. To foster interaction and discussion, pair and group are the best tools because they allow the students to communicate. Providing students with good topics will encourage them to speak. See appendix for some hints.

Meaningful tasks:

Tasks you assign students must be relevant. Assign tasks that are neither too easy nor too difficult. Also, tasks that are well defined, appealing to the students, they result in expected outcomes. The group prepares the students for real life acts of communication. Therefore teachers must impress upon the students that this kind of group work is relatable to something they will encounter when they leave the classroom. This is the most important aspect of group work because it is what will motivate the students to learn inside of the class. The hope that they will be able to use their language outside of the class inspires students to participate and try to

improve their language skills. Examples of tasks:

- Shopping;
- Comparing issues/contrasting ideas and debating ideas;
- Detecting differences;
- Putting in order (numbers, sentence sequence, paragraphs, picture sequences,);
- Planning trips;
- Guessing games/Problem solving;
- Finding and correcting errors in sentences and paragraphs;
- Find someone who...(Interviews)
- Word search (cross words and puzzles)
- Ordering breakfast;
- Catching a bus;
- (Re) write making changes/listening-note taking.

Organization:

If the teacher organizes his/her class in the way the situation more likely permits, the majority of problems are minimized. Teachers must be attentive to what kind of work will be most advantageous to students. If the teacher is well-prepared and organises the activity in a way that is clear to the students to the students and worthwhile to the students, they will be more encouraged and participate more fully. I believe in “well prepared, half done.” Or “everything that can be done is worth doing well.” A teacher must decide whether he or she would like student students to work in groups, pairs, or as a whole class, or individually.

Teachers should:

- Show enthusiasm and respect for students;
- Try to learn as quickly as possible the students' name and use it the most you can;
- Be firm and fair;
- Challenge students to grow and develop; don't threaten;
- Provide clear directions;
- Offer positive, prompt and honest feedback;
- Involve students in problem solving and decision making regarding classroom issues (negotiating a test date, submitting an assignment ...);
- Design goals that are:

Specific – What are we going to do?

Measurable – How will I assess success?

Attainable- Can I expect to achieve it?

Relevant – Why is it important?

Time-Oriented – How much time do we need for this?

Use the power of:

- Realia: including yourself (explore your presence)
- Pictures and drawings in your lesson.
- Music and songs;
- Games and problem-solving
- Jokes and humour
- Text editing and grammar correction and feedback
- Concentration games
- Dictating/story telling/ reading/writing

b) For the School Managers

Teachers are the best partners you have. Without them little or nothing could be done at the school level. So, it is time to provide them ideal conditions at work such as:

- a. Appropriate classroom atmosphere (accordingly equipped);
- b. Humanized working schedules (Please don't deliver teachers [7^o, 9^o (1st/3rd); 11^o (3rd/5th); 12^o (4th/6th)] all at the same time;
- c. Harmonize the system of class distribution so that some classes aren't too large or too small;
- d. Provide space for language activities (classrooms are too crowded for whole class interview, or stretch leg activity, e.g etc);
- e. Provide prompt, honest and regular feedback to teachers. That is a way to help them improve continually;
- f. Persuade other school subjects to accept languages as 'privileged/special' subjects; and as such needs more flexibility; less formality.

c) For the Ministry of Education/ ISE (Instituto Superior de Educação)

The Ministry of Education must work in strict coordination with ISE. This would provide appropriate guidance and policies to ISE. ISE must mediate the work between the Ministry and Secondary Schools. Finally ISE must work in strict harmony with High Schools in order to promote an integrated training to their trainee-teachers. So, professionals from ISE should keep a more regular touch with schools in order to collect more subsidies for their trainees/training. They should not stick to the punctual visit to the Secondary Schools to observe and/or evaluate the trainee-teachers.

I recommend though, that teachers from ISE must involve more in High Schools' daily routine. This will open their horizon in terms of options and availability, weakness and strength and altogether, redirect somewhat the English training at ISE. They will for sure better prepare future and/or in-service teachers to face large classes, lack of material, adverse attitudes and so on.

The Ministry of Education should work on the system of evaluation in order to untie teachers from working hard to prepare students for written tests. But let them prepare students for real life communication.

The Ministry must work on the grading formula that states 20% for OEA (Outros Elementos de Avaliação); classroom activities, communication skills and all other issues, and proposes 80% for written tests.

I am quite convinced that the contribution I have shared above is very little to cure all the illnesses our teaching suffers from. But I must not be wrong, if I say that I have thrown some light in the confusion. That is, I pointed out to all the important authorities in the cause of learning in Cape Verde, the improvements that need to be done. But, asking for changes to the ministry of education may be slow to come about. Rather than wait for the government to institute changes, we as teachers must be proactive with our ideas. I propose that coordination meetings include group work as a topic for teacher's consideration. Teachers must be educated on the importance of group work in all levels and encouraged to use group work in their classes. We must try to eliminate the fear and the negative assumptions that teachers have about group work. It is a powerful tool for motivation that must not be neglected. The resistance to group work that was noted in chapter three could be minimized by simply creating an atmosphere where teachers feel more at ease to experiment with group work and supported by their coordinators and peers.

However, a spontaneous question might arise while or after reading through this paper. For instance, there is no reference to the low salary teachers earn, the slow progression and promotion in their career, the inexistent in-service policy (abroad or locally) – all excellent motivational tools for teachers. For students, the impact of group work could be evaluated by studying the students themselves. Looking at the way that students respond to group work in the actual classroom setting would be a way to provide more specific strategies for group work in the language classroom. These emotions were on purpose. Otherwise, I would be obliged to write another paper on the subject. That is exactly what I finally suggest other researchers to do. There is enough food for thought; believe me!

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LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Interviews/conversation

Interview with teachers

R: Why do you send so many students out?

T: They're too noisy... don't pay attention ... re terrible. I don't tolerate.

R: Don't you think they aren't motivated?

T: Oh... they must behave well. In MY class they have to be QUIET.

R: Don't you think they are doing things on purpose to go out? Try to keep them in, change your teaching style and see... Keep them busy.

R: Researcher; T: Teacher

Appendix 2

Questionnaire

Question for the Students.

1. Do you like English? Why?
2. Describe briefly the English lessons you have been having.
3. English lessons have never seemed endless to you? Yes / No. Why?
4. Do you often work in groups in English classes? Yes/No
5. How can group work help you in your learning process? Comment.
6. How do you get motivation for an English class? Is it the activities or teachers?
7. Describe your feelings when you work in group.
8. Mention some words that the teacher uses to stimulate you.
9. Mention some words that have discouraged you.
10. What sort of teacher would you like to have?

Appendix 3

Humour and Jokes

The description below evidences that motivation can be reached and maintained through various forms: I am not presenting details on how to use them (lesson plan, procedures) because lots of times it depends on moments and occasions in a lesson.

For example, while discussing adjectives and adverbs; the adjective hungry was presented. Students started arguing: angry or hungry? Realising that, I could not remain indifferent. So I contextualized it as follows:

A businessman entered a restaurant and ordered a big bowl of soap because he was very angry. The waiter thought for a few seconds and replied: ‘But ...Sir, is that really what you want?’ The man continued (furiously) ‘yes and I’m VERY ANGRY.’ So having no option, the waiter went to kitchen and brought what the man had ordered. When the man saw that BOWL of SOAP he immediately checked some words in his

dictionary. Then turned to the (very ashamed) and said: ‘I’m sorry, I want a big BOWL of SOUP because I’m very HUNGRY.

The students laughed to death. This means that they understood the difference between soap and soup; angry and hungry. In this joke I was able to teach simultaneously, grammar, vocabulary; pronunciation and intonation.

Problem solving: A transport problem.

‘There was a farmer who had himself, his dog, his chicken, and a bag of grain across the river. Unfortunately, his boat was so small that the farmer could carry only the dog, the chicken, and the grain during one crossing. Also, he could not leave the dog with the chicken because he would eat her, and then he could not leave the chicken with the grain because she would it. What did the farmer do to get himself and everything else across the river safely?’

(From Techniques and resources in TEACHING GRAMMAR by Celce-Murcia)

Realia and personal belongings

Being inexpensive, available and loved by the holder, there is no better resource material than classroom stuff and personal belongings for an interesting class. I used realia successfully in a 12th grade lesson where the content discussion was: Using adjectives/adverbs for persuasion. Each student was asked to bring some belonging: a bracelet, a watch, a pair of trainers, glasses, or earrings, a pen, a cell phone, whatever they could manage. The next step was: after the teacher had modelled the performance, students were asked to place in front and present: ‘Hello! Hello, Look at this cell phone. It’s Nokia! Light, silver shiny, brilliant, it connects you to the world. Anything better?

Students got inspired by the example and did the same successfully as well.

Music and song lyrics

I taught the present simple and perfect continuous to elementary students using the song '*I am sailing*' by Rod Stewart efficiently. I split students in groups and distributed the song lyrics. Students got surprised when I told them they should come up with their own melody for the song. It could be reggae, pop, morna, zouk, rap and so on. Implicitly, we were able to focus on structures, vocabulary, and pronunciation. But what students really appreciated was being able to show their talents through creativity and imagination.

Appendix 4

Making the most of pictures

Detecting differences